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Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5967th meeting

Wednesday, 27 August 2008, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Du Xiacong
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Bayley
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 21 August 2008 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/568)

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08-49182 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 21 August 2008 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/568)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Lebanon and Israel, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Salam (Lebanon) and Mr. Carmon (Israel) took seats at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/583, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Belgium, Croatia, France, Italy, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Members also have before them document S/2008/425, containing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), and document S/2008/568, containing the text of a letter dated 21 August 2008 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Indonesia, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Panama, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1832 (2008).

I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Carmon (Israel): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your able stewardship of the Council during the month of August. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General and the relevant Member States for their involvement and engagement and for their continuing commitment to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). I would also like to express appreciation to the troop-contributing countries, the Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the Strategic Cell in New York and the troops on the ground. Israel appreciates the difficulty of their task and values their dedication. They have been fulfilling their mission serving the values of peacekeeping, which has been characterized by growing complexity and challenges, especially over the past year.

Israel welcomes the extension of UNIFIL's mandate for another year. UNIFIL plays an important role in south Lebanon, with the main task of assisting in the establishment, between the Blue Line and the Litani River, of an area free of all armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL.

It has been more than two years since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), and the situation in Lebanon appears to be one of ongoing concern. Today, more than ever before, we are witnessing challenges to UNIFIL's activities and mandate. The presence and massive redeployment of armed Hizbullah elements and their acquisition of capabilities both north and south of the Litani River, along with the continuous transfer of weapons from Iran and Syria to Hizbullah, are blatant violations of resolution 1701 (2006) and

other relevant Security Council resolutions. In that context, let me refer members to the first report of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team (LIBAT), which speaks for itself. I am confident that LIBAT's second report, which is expected shortly, will only strengthen the findings of its predecessor.

The recent report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2008/425) highlights the challenges faced by UNIFIL. The report clearly identifies several incidents in which hostile groups equipped with unauthorized arms observed and monitored UNIFIL's activities and impeded its freedom of movement. Those incidents, which are only part of a larger phenomenon, not only represent ongoing violations of resolution 1701 (2006), but also constitute a danger to the stability in our region. In that regard, they also pose a threat to the safety of UNIFIL's personnel.

In that light, Israel expects UNIFIL, under its renewed mandate, to exert its authority to take all necessary action in areas where its forces are deployed, to ensure that its area of operations is not utilized for hostile activities of any kind and to resist attempts to prevent it from discharging its mandate. As we all see, that is indeed a great challenge.

The new policy guidelines of the Lebanese Government further complicate, inter alia, the efforts of UNIFIL to fulfil its mandate. That development contradicts the core elements of resolution 1701 (2006). Further, it raises concerns as to the commitment of the Lebanese Government to extend, under resolution 1701 (2006), its authority over all of its territory through its own legitimate armed forces so that there will be no weapons present without the consent of the Government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon. Instead of encouraging one of the main elements of resolution 1701 (2006) — the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon — the new guidelines, in effect, support Hizbullah's actions. That should be of major concern to all.

Let me stress once again Israel's appreciation to the international community for its continued engagement through the present resolution and for the work of UNIFIL. Israel attributes great importance to the cooperation between UNIFIL and the concerned parties, including the cooperation carried out through the tripartite meetings. For its part, Israel remains committed to cooperating with the Security Council, the Secretary-General, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNIFIL on the ground in the fulfilment of resolution 1701 (2006), other relevant Security Council resolutions regarding Lebanon and this important resolution.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Lebanon.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon): At the outset, I would like to extend my congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month. I would also like to recognize your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam, for his effective stewardship of the Council last month.

First and foremost, my Government would like to thank, through you, Mr. President, all members of the Council for the decision taken today to renew for another year the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). I am sure you are aware how important today's Council decision is to my fellow Lebanese citizens, who have been the victims of repeated Israeli aggressions since the 1978 invasion, which led to the adoption of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and to the creation of the first UNIFIL. We would also like to take this opportunity to commend UNIFIL for its remarkable work; to praise the wise and courageous leadership of its Commander, General Graziano; and to thank all troop-contributing countries and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

In two days' time, it will be the second anniversary of the adoption of Council resolution 1701 (2006). During those two years, the Lebanese Government has reaffirmed time and again its commitment to the full implementation of the resolution in its entirety and to working closely with UNIFIL in pursuit of security and stability in its area of operations. What greater evidence of the seriousness of that commitment could there be than the deployment of the Lebanese army in the south promptly after the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006)? Let me also mention the appreciation of my Government for the technical support provided by the two Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team (LIBAT) missions and assure the Council that it will continue to give due consideration to the LIBAT reports.

We need to acknowledge the fact that resolution 1701 (2006), two years after its adoption, has not been fully implemented. What else can we conclude when Israel continues to violate Lebanese airspace on a daily basis, as stated by the Secretary-General in his seventh report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2008/425); when Israel persists in its refusal to hand over to the United Nations the maps of the deadly cluster bombs it has planted in the fields and farms of southern Lebanon; when Israel does not withdraw from the northern part of Al-Ghajar village; and when a solution to the Shabaa Farms issue, as proposed by the Lebanese Government in its seven-point plan, has not yet been reached?

Accordingly, can there still be any doubt about the identity of the party that must be held responsible for obstructing the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). Indeed, res ipsa loquitur — the thing speaks for itself, says the legal adage.

Moreover, it is surprising that Mr. Ehud Barak, Defence Minister of Israel, continues to refuse to meet General Graziano, the Commander of UNIFIL, to discuss the situation on the Lebanese border and the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). "I've been asking for a meeting with Barak for six months, but they keep putting me off", Graziano is reported to have said, according to the Israeli daily *Haaretz*. On 22 August 2008, *Haaretz* also reported that Graziano has been complaining that he has not been able to meet Israeli Chief-of-Staff Ashkenazi either.

More disturbing, however, is the fact that Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Olmert, have recently been launching a series of alarming threats against Lebanon under various pretexts and allegations. This prompted our Prime Minister, Mr. Fuad Siniora, to write to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on 22 August, warning that the current ongoing violations by Israel of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), coupled with recurring statements containing the threat of the use of force and coercion against Lebanon, raised serious concerns about Israeli intentions.

Mr. Siniora urged him to address firmly Israel's defiance of its obligations to fully abide by the letter and spirit of United Nations Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).

Against this background, I am confident that the Council will understand why I would like to thank it for the important resolution adopted today. It carries an unequivocal and renewed commitment to the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of my country.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.